

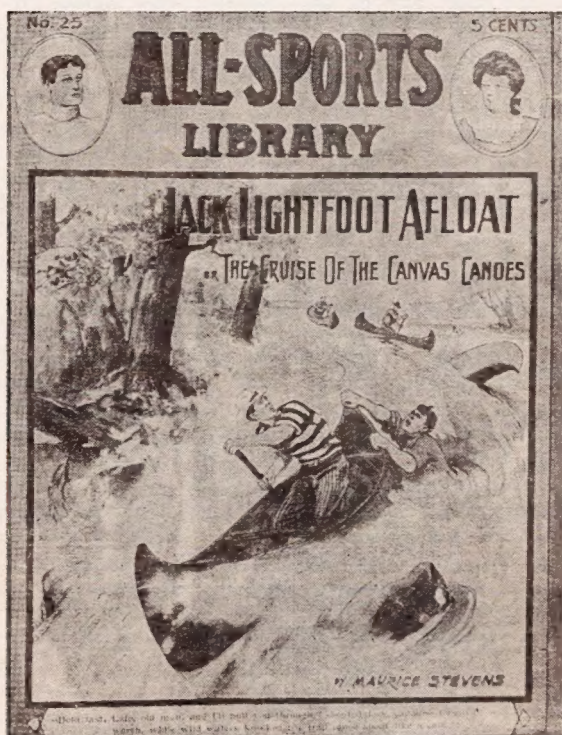
DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 30

July 15, 1962

Whole No. 358



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 35

ALL SPORTS LIBRARY

Published by Winner Library Co., a publishing pseudonym of Street & Smith, 56 issues, February 11, 1905 to March 3, 1906. 8x11, 32 pages with colored cover. New stories featuring the adventures of Jack Lightfoot, imitating Frank Merriwell. Later reprinted in Medal Library, Sport Stories and Round the World Library.

YOUNG DIAMOND DICK

By J. Edward Leithead

Just because the "son of his dad" lends his name to the title of this article, don't think for a moment that old Diamond Dick, Handsome Harry and other favorite characters of that long list of "The Most Unique and Fascinating Tales of Western Romance" (remember that blurb?) will be neglected. They'll be given a full share of attention, though your Bertie Wade or Diamond Dick, Jr., may get the spotlight oftenest because more stories featured him than any of the others; after all, he was the youth of the West, the number one hero of the long, long serial that started with black-and-whites in 1878 and ended with No. 762 of a color cover weekly in 1911.

That is, Richard Wade or Diamond Dick, Sr. and Handsome Harry started it all in 1878. Bertie didn't show up until Nugget Library #16, Dashing Diamond Dick, was published, and then as a small boy. As stated in a previous article, the creator of the father-and-son combination, and of Handsome Harry, the Old Sarpint of Siskiyou, nearly or quite as important a character as the Dicks themselves, was Robert Russell.

After doing 25 or so of these stories, Russell never wrote of the Diamond Dicks again, though his tales kept popping up in reprints, and it's a curious fact that it was not he who gave

a brief history of the family in Diamond Dick, Jr., Weekly #60, Diamond Dick, Jr. Out of Sight, or, The Disappearance at Lost Lake. Thomas Wade married a woman named Dizma. Richard was their son, who "became a noted sport and detective," and famous as Diamond Dick (of the gem-studded vest). He married beautiful Alice Reardon, and they also had a son, Bertrand or Diamond Dick, Jr. All the early Diamond Dicks (except the first two serials) were signed "W. B. Lawson," which was a stock name, and the probable author of #60 was Thomas C. Harbaugh. Both he and T. W. Hanshew did some of the earliest ones, before William Wallace Cook came into the picture. When he did, Cook also used the pseudonym "Lawson."

But this is moving into the era of the color cover weeklies a bit too soon. A lot of Diamond Dicks first appeared in black-and-white wraps. In 1889, the two original New York Weekly serials by Russell, Diamond Dick and Silver Mask, the forerunners of hundreds of Diamond Dick tales, were reprinted in Log Cabin Library (first edition only, in both cases), #14, Diamond Dick in Arizona (re-titled) and #17, Silver Mask.

Nugget Library reprinted both the above with some re-titling in #111 and #125, but much, much earlier new stories of Richard Wade by Russell

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had started in this library—#16, 17, 18, then none until #34, *The Shade of Diamond Dick*. Understand, these were about Richard Wade, not Bertie; Richard was young then, with long brown hair and mustache (the reason I know the color is that many of these original black-and-whites were done over by a different artist when the color covers came in). Above #34, the Diamond Dick stories were issued frequently in *Nugget*, 31 of them in all, counting the reprints of the two New York Weekly serials. #109 was Diamond Dick's *Discard*, or, *Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Dig-Out*, and altogether there were seven by Russell with young Diamond Dick as the hero.

Early in the 1890's, the New York Five-Cent Library reprinted the series published in *Nugget*, leaving out the two New York Weekly stories. Meantime, New York Five-Cent was re-named Diamond Dick Library (the stories were not all about the two Dicks and Handsome Harry but interspersed with detective and Wild West tales by other authors), and, beginning with #117, Diamond Dick's *Discovery*, or, *The Great Clean-up at Golden City*, some 53 brand new Diamond Dick titles were added to the growing list. In all of these Bertie was the leading character. He cut a dashing figure in his semi-Mexican garb, though I liked his cowboy rig of the George C. Jenks "Diamond Dicks" better, possibly because I first knew him dressed that way—I had to buy back numbers, as a kid, to find out who "old Diamond Dick" was.

Since Robert Russell had bowed out of the series as an author before these 53 new ones were published, it follows that Hanshew and Harbaugh, particularly the latter, must have been busy under the pseudonym "W. B. Lawson" which appeared without fail on every issue. Those were good Western yarns, too, quite original, having much to do with outlaws (even Chinese outlaws—"King Hip's Tigers"), railroading, mining, ranching, many mix-ups on the Rio Grande and over the border. Bertie at this time was often called "Little Thunderbolt."

Richard Wade, meanwhile, was growing older, with not much of anything to do apparently while his handsome son held the spotlight (but later he was to come into his own once again). I wonder now, where was the beautiful Alice Wade nee Reardon all this time? I do not recall that her passing was ever mentioned.

#205 was the last Diamond Dick in Diamond Dick Library, and this was re-issued later in the large-sized Diamond Dick, Jr. Weekly #253, *Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Dark Case*, or, *The Spell of the "Loco-Loco."* Quite a bit happened before that, however. An entirely new type of dime novel had gone through the experimental stage with flying colors—and color was the keynote, in place of the black-and-white illustrated covers so long in vogue.

In 1896, therefore, Street & Smith started publishing the highly successful Diamond Dick, Jr.—*The Boys' Best Weekly*. It was issued at first in small size, 7x10½, like the early Nick Carter and Tip Top Weeklies. Color covers by an artist whose name I've never known. #1 was Diamond Dick, Jr.'s *Marked Bullet*, or, *The Wreck of the Fast Mail*. The author, either Hanshew or Harbaugh. Harbaugh finally had the job alone, but he was quite capable of carrying on, a top-notch dime novelist of long and varied experience. The late Charles H. Austin had reprinted as a little booklet an article from Beadle's *Banner Weekly*, 1894, by Harbaugh on the subject of writing dime novels, "T. C. Harbaugh, Popular and Prolific Beadle Writer, Corrects Wrong Impression of Dime Novels and Their Authors."

Harbaugh (or Harbaugh and Hanshew together) kept turning out new adventures of Diamond Dick, Jr., and Handsome Harry and a few other "pards" (one of them a Chinese named Hop Wah, not the clever Hop who enlivened the pages of *Tousey's Wild West Weekly*) for a run of 103 numbers without a reprint showing up. All signed by "W. B. Lawson," all following a rather off-the-trail Western pattern which proved very interesting.

The Klondike gold rush happened

when the weekly was about a year old, and the publishers and Harbaugh packed Bertie Wade alias Diamond Dick, Jr., and jovial, red-bearded pard Handsome Harry off on a quest for gold in #53, Off for Alaska, or, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Trail to Circle City, #54, The Rush for the New El Dorado, or, Diamond Dick, Jr., on to Dawson, #55, In the Klondike Mines, or, A Ton and a Half in Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Care, #56, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Klondike Claim, or, Striking It Rich in the Frozen North and #57, Diamond Dick, Jr. Homeward Bound, or, Breasting the Perils of Chilkoot Pass. This was an excellent series, and not the last time young Diamond Dick was in the frozen north, but it wasn't Harbaugh who wrote of his later adventures there.

One other outstanding novel with a factual background was #66, Diamond Dick, Jr. at the Old Ranch, or, Queer Customers for Boarders. In the 1880's, a family named Bender, while outwardly running a road-house in a lonely section near Independence, Kansas, was actually engaged in robbery and murder. There were quite a few travelers, some of them well-heeled and most of them unsuspecting, particularly since the Benders had an attractive daughter, Kate (there is report they also had a son John). Kate Bender apparently was quite willing to lure victims to their death, for a share of the loot, was not an accessory through fear of her murderous parents. One method of disposing of travelers with valuables was to seat them near a canvas curtain in the barroom; Bender, or his son, armed with an axe, and while Kate held the traveler's attention, would sneak up back of the curtain and bring the axe crashing down on the fellow's head. That several were thus victimized was discovered when, after the exposure and flight of the Benders, the bodies of travelers who had never reached their destination were dug out of the ground around the road-house.

This was the murder outfit that Bertie Wade was up against in #66, al-

though the family was named Norman. And you can be sure young Diamond Dick didn't get his head split with an axe—the cover picture shows him slinging a brace of “.44 pops” on the vicious-looking Normans, the old man swinging an axe, the old woman a knife, while back of them on the floor lies the Normans' daughter, presumably a KO casualty of the fight. I know very well the young sport wouldn't have shot a girl!

Bertie and Handsome Harry got into and out of perilous situations without the aid of Richard Wade, “Diamond Dick, Sr.”, until #104 was issued, Dashing Diamond Dick, or, The Tigers of Tombstone, a reprint of Robert Russell's story in Nugget and New York Five-Cent Libraries. Followed 4 original Diamond Dick, Jr.s., then another reprint in #109, Diamond Dick's Death Trail, or, Cyclone Sam of “Shian.” #113 was Diamond Dick's Claim, or, The Gold Bugs of 'Frisco, another Russell reprint, and again the elder Wade is hero, with Handsome Harry in a prominent role, and Bertie in the picture, only 13 years old though this issue is surrounded by others in which Diamond Dick, Jr. is a young man in his twenties. A sequel to this one was a Russell reprint in #117, The Shade of Diamond Dick, or, The Ghost of the Mine—it all concerns Diamond Dick in an Idaho setting, fighting for a mine, something he did frequently. Many of these early Diamond Dick novels—both of father and son—were about mining and railroading, with less about ranching and cattle than came later. A good one with ranch and range background was #131, Diamond Dick, Jr., and the Bar-20 Brand, or, The Shindy at Samarang. This, I feel sure, was William Wallace Cook's. The covers had improved, too, from #104 onward.

Of the 25 or so Diamond Dick, Sr., stories in the old black-and-white libraries, 18 were reprinted in the color cover Diamond Dick, Jr. Weekly, all the covers being new. With #129, Diamond Dick's Dicker, or, The Horsefiend of Uintah and #130, Diamond

Dick's Drag-Net, or, The Killers of Kootenai, they began reprinting them in pairs.

Richard Wade was pictured on these color covers as a long-brown-haired, handlebar-mustached Westerner in his thirties, perhaps—he'd started his adventurous career in print at age 25—and he didn't wear the semi-Mexican costume, slashed trousers, etc. that was his attire later on. In all that Robert Russell wrote about him—which really preceded the long run of Diamond Dick, Jr.s.—Richard Wade was never referred to as "old"; that came about naturally enough as the series progressed, Harbaugh turning it over to Cook, Cook turning it over to Jenks—and Cook getting the series back again in its declining days. Jenks never wrote anything about the elder Diamond Dick, never mentioned him that I can remember.

Cook, in top writing form, took both the Dicks through some of their most interesting, even startling adventures. Old Diamond Dick (his hair and mustache grew white as the passage of years was recorded by the artists on the covers, one of whom was Marmaduke Russell and none better) became "the veteran", "the ranchero"; young Diamond Dick, growing taller and handsomer (oh, yes, the young women he was fortunate enough to meet on the frontier didn't fail to notice), wore his yellow hair long after the fashion of his dad, and still was referred to as "the young sport," though he was more of a crackshot deputy sheriff, expert cowhand, hogger (in the railroad stuff) and lucky gold-seeker. He was no hand—or his father, either—to while away his time in a frontier saloon with the pasteboards. Handsome Harry, also nearly always on hand, never got a day older; no gray appeared in that flaming red beard and long hair; he was the unchangeable roaring, red-shirted giant, the "Ol' Sarpint of Siskiyou, wi' seventeen rattles and a button," who howled as he charged into battle, "Wake, snakes, and shine yore scales!", who once, right before your eyes on the cover

of #389, Diamond Dick in Old Santa Fe, lifted a carriage by the rear axle in mighty arms and dumped the driver into the street (in Artist Russell's best style).

Another historical touch in the early issues (like the case of the Benders of Kansas) was the series of three about the Wild Bunch, that great cattle thief and train robber brotherhood, who spread the Hole-in-the-Wall of Wyoming to depredate also Montana, Colorado and Utah. The Wild Bunch leader was Butch Cassidy (George Leroy Parker), and among his best long-riders were The Sundance Kid (Harry Longbaugh), Kid Curry (Harvey Logan), Ben Kilpatrick, the Tall Texan and Harry Tracy. Have you ever seen the group picture of these boys in store clothes and derbies? A sporty but amiable appearing bunch that you wouldn't think were as deadly as rattlesnakes when they donned sombreros, hair pants and spurs, flour-sack hoods and Colt's equalizers. But they were; and when William Wallace Cook thought up the idea of having Bertie Wade and Handsome Harry buck Butch Cassidy's five hundred rustlers, train, bank and stage robbers (young Diamond Dick even entering the Hole-in-the-Wall after them in #122, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Deputy, #123, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Vanguard and #124, Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Bogus Ball, the author very nearly let the young sport take a bite bigger than he could chew. For Bertie, making Butch captive in the second story, loses him at the last moment; then, with the mighty Sarpint to lend a hand, he gets the come-alongs on Butch again in the third tale. If there were any other dime novels about Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch I've yet to hear of them.

The background of the Diamond Dick tales was the West in the final phases of its wildness, when there were railroads and numerous cattle and mining towns. It was beyond the time when Indian-fighting was an everyday business, though Indians, jumping the reservations, were featured now and then.

(to be continued)

NEWSY NEWS

by **Ralph F. Cummings**

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

Bill Burns says Edw. Ingraham is a school teacher, and that he teaches the 9th grade, and on the side he writes stories for children in juvenile story papers. Ed likes Liberty Boys of 76, but as they are costly and hard to get, thinks he had better collect some thing else, instead. He and Don Steinhauer are great friends, seems Edw. was at the Penn. fair, I think it was, when he came across a Work and Win, if I'm not mistaken, with Don Steinhauer's name and address in it, so he called up Don on the phone, and visited him, since then, they've been to each other's places.

Bill Burns asked, "Why is The Boys Leader" story paper so scarce? This was published by Frank Tousey after the other story papers came out, such as the first issue of Boys of New York was dated Aug. 23, 1885, first issue of Young Men of America was dated Sept. 13, 1887, and first issue of The Boys Leader was dated Nov. 11, 1878. Possibly The Boys Leader didn't sell as well as it should, for they really are scarce. Don't know as I ever saw a copy in my life, and still I have about 150 different old story papers in my collection, but I don't have that one, and I don't know who has. Frank Tousey's Boys Weekly ran to 74 issues. New York Weekly Story Teller was started by Munro and ran 9 issues, then the title was changed to "Our Boys" and ran 131 issues. Somewhere along the line Tousey bought the "Our Boys."

Walter Higgins had some luck a while back, for over 200 novels in his own home town, over a dozen kinds

in the lot, and Frank Schott also had some luck, for he got in around 213 old novels up in Milwaukee, mostly Buffalo Bill Stories, if I'm not mistaken.

Harry Weatherbee has moved to 137 Wilson Ave., New Waterford, N. S., Canada. Says he likes the new place.

Gerald J. McIntosh has also moved to 920 S. Jefferson St., Little Rock, Ark. Bet you had a time of it moving all those heavy books, magazines, and novels.

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